DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 448 796 JC 010 066

TITLE	Retention Patterns of NVCC First-Time Students by Selected Characteristics.
INSTITUTION	Northern Virginia Community Coll., Annandale. Office of Institutional Research.
REPORT NO	RR-6-00
PUB DATE	2000-05-00
NOTE	32p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Persistence; *College Freshmen; Community Colleges; Enrollment; *Predictor Variables; *School Holding Power; Student Educational Objectives; *Two Year College Students; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Northern Virginia Community College

ABSTRACT

This Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) report examines patterns of fall to spring retention rates of first-time students. The report is divided into five sections: (1) retention rates analyzed by students' educational objectives; (2) retention rates by program placement and award type; (3) retention rates of three cohorts of students: first-time students from fall semester 1996, 1997, and 1998; (4) retention rates of cohorts analyzed by enrollment status; and (5) retention rates of students analyzed by time of attendance (day and/or night). Several retention patterns emerged: students who were 21 years of age or younger, those enrolled full-time, and students who attended both day and night classes had a higher probability of returning to NVCC. Similarly, students who indicated that their academic goal was to transfer to a four-year institution or to earn a degree had higher retention rate than students who indicated that their educational objective was to advance in their current job. Students who were program placed during their first semester and/or intended to be at NVCC for three to four semesters had higher retention rates. (Contains 43 tables and 8 figures.) (JA)

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RETENTION PATTERNS OF NVCC FIRST-TIME STUDENTS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

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Research Report No. 6-00

Office of Institutional Research
Northern Virginia Community College

May 2000

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NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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RETENTION PATTERNS OF NVCC FIRST-TIME STUDENTS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

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RETENTION PATTERNS OF NVCC FIRST-TIME STUDENTS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Abstract

This report is part of a series on student retention at Northern Virginia Community College. A previous study (OIR Report "Retention of Fall 1994 First-Time Students by Race, No. 2-99") examined retention patterns by race. The present study attempts to understand the relationship between other selected student characteristics and retention rates.

Several patterns emerged when retention rates were analyzed by selected student characteristics. Students who indicated their primary goal was to transfer to a four-year institution had higher retention rates (approximately 64%) than students who indicated their educational objective was to advance in their current job (approximately 37%).

Another group of students with relatively high retention rates were those who indicated they would attend NVCC for three to four semesters (64% to 66%). Students who indicated they would only attend NVCC for one semester had return rates from 28% to 33%.

Retention rates were analyzed by student age. Younger students were more likely to return to NVCC [illegible] older students. Specifically, students who were 21 years of age and under had an overall return rate of 66%. Students 45 years of age and older had an overall return rate of 40%.

When retention rates were analyzed by age and enrollment status, it was found that students 21 years or less who were enrolled full-time were retained at very high levels (77% to 78%). The return rates for the full-time students in other age groups were relatively low. Similarly, part-time students who were 21 years of age or less had higher return rates (51% to 55%) than students who were older.

Students who were program placed in their first semester of enrollment returned to NVCC at a consistently higher rate (over 60%) than those who were not program placed. In addition, students enrolled in Associate in Science programs had higher retention rates (over 64%) than students enrolled in Certificate programs (48%).

Students who enrolled in both day and night classes had retention rates of approximately 67%. Students enrolled only in night classes had a lower overall retention rate of 39%. Time of class attendance was used as a proxy variable for work and family commitments.

RETENTION PATTERNS OF NVCC FIRST-TIME STUDENTS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Introduction

The purpose of this report was to examine the patterns of fall to spring retention rates of first-time NVCC students.[1] The study looked at the relationship between selected student characteristics and retention rates. These characteristics were students' educational objectives, program placement and award type, the age of the students, enrollment status (full-time versus part-time), and time of attendance (day versus night).[2] The analysis also further examined student retention rates by a) student age and enrollment status and b) student age and time of attendance.

The retention rates were analyzed for three different cohorts of students. These three cohorts were selected in order to ensure that the data reflected general retention patterns at NVCC and not a "random occurrence" during a single semester. Cohort 1 consisted of all first-time students who enrolled at NVCC in the fall 1996 semester. The returning rate was defined as those students who returned the following spring semester (spring 1997). Cohort 2 consisted of all first-time students who enrolled at NVCC in the fall 1997 semester and who returned the following spring 1998 semester. The third group of students, Cohort 3, consisted of all first-time students who enrolled at NVCC during the fall 1998 semester and returned for the spring 1999 semester.

For the purpose of this report, the terms "retention rate" and "return rate" were used interchangeably. The terms denoted the proportion of NVCC fall semester entrants who returned the following spring semester. In addition, the term "first-time students" refers to those students who were new to NVCC regardless of whether or not they had previously attended another college.[3]

This report is divided into five sections.[4] Section I presents retention rates analyzed by students' educational objectives and Section II gives retention rates by program placement and award type. Section III presents the retention rates of the three cohorts, analyzed by the students' age. Section IV gives information on the retention rates of the cohorts, analyzed by enrollment status and Section V presents the retention rates of students analyzed by time of attendance.

Table 1 presents the retention rates, which ranged from 54% to 56%, for the three cohorts. As shown in Figure 1, the retention rates for the three cohorts were very similar. These rates show that approximately one half of the first-time students who enrolled at NVCC for the fall semester did not return for the spring semester. It is possible that some of the students may have enrolled at NVCC at a later time.

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[1] The proportion of first-time students at NVCC has steadily increased from 25% in fall 1996 to 28% in fall 1998.

[2] For data on student retention rates analyzed by race, see OIR report "Retention of Fall 1994 First-Time Students by Race, No. 2-99".

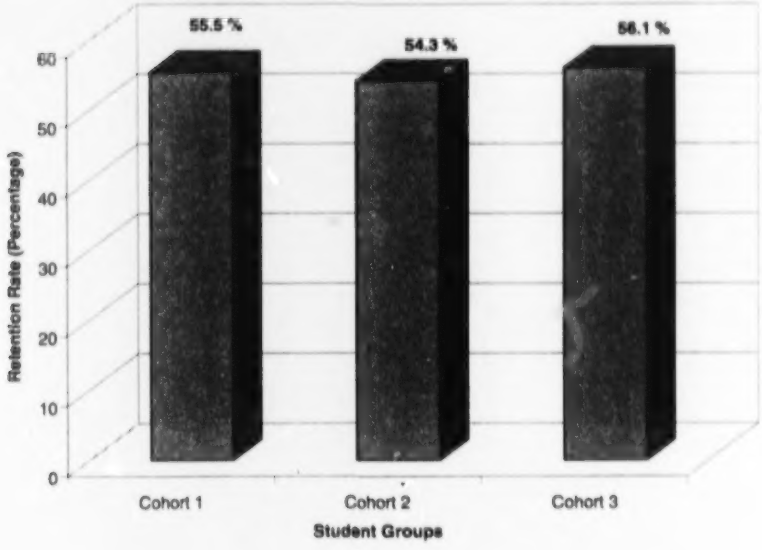
[3] It is important to note that this report pertains only to the retention rates of first-time students, not all enrolled NVCC students.

[4] While the tables in the text present only the retention rates, the tables in Appendices A and B provide detailed data for these rates.

Table 1: Retention Rates, First-Time Students

Cohorts	Number of 1st Time Students Enrolled in Fall Semester	Number of Students Returned for Spring Semester	Percentage of Returning Students
	#	#	%
Cohort 1 (fall 1996 to spring 1997)	9,201	5,109	55.5
Cohort 2 (fall 1997 to spring 1998)	9,435	5,124	54.3
Cohort 3 (fall 1998 to spring 1999)	10,310	5,780	56.1

Figure 1: Retention Rates, First-Time Students



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Section I: Retention Rates By Educational Objectives

Educational Objectives

Entering students were asked to indicate their educational objectives on their NVCC Application for Admission. Table 2 presents the return rates for the three cohorts by these educational objectives.[5] As shown in the table, the highest rate of return was for students who stated their educational objective was to transfer to a four-year college or university. Approximately 64% of these students returned the following spring semester. Students who indicated their educational objective was advancement in their present job or self-improvement had low return rates. Less than 40% of these students returned the following spring semester. Over half of the students who did not indicate an educational objective returned the following spring semester (see Table 2).

Table 2: Retention Rates By Educational Objectives *

Educational Objectives	Cohort 1 (Fall 1996 to Spring 1997) Retention Rate	Cohort 2 (Fall 1997 to Spring 1998) Retention Rate	Cohort 3 (Fall 1998 to Spring 1999) Retention Rate
Transfer	63.9 %	64.0 %	65.0 %
Obtain Job	52.6 %	55.1 %	53.4 %
Current Job Advancement	39.6 %	33.0 %	37.7 %
Explore Career Possibilities	49.3 %	49.3 %	46.7 %
Self - Improvement	37.0 %	34.5 %	38.7 %
Unknown	51.6 %	55.7 %	68.6 %
All Students	*55.5 %*	*54.3 %*	*56.2 %* **

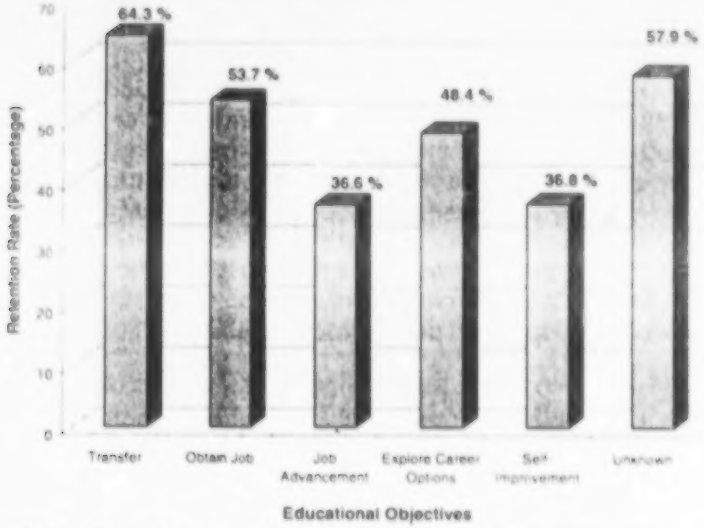
* For detailed data refer to Table A1 in Appendix A.

** Calculation of the decimal points differed slightly in some instances.

Figure 2 summarizes the data presented in Table 2. Students who indicated job advancement or self-improvement as their objective had lower retention rates than those who indicated other educational objectives. These students may have intended to only take one or two courses at NVCC.

[5] Appendix A provides detailed data, which were used in the calculation of the retention rates. Appendix B presents detailed data on the proportion of first-time students in these categories. Each table in the report has accompanying tables in Appendix A and B.

Figure 2: Retention Rates By Educational Objectives *



* The data presented in Figure 2 were calculated by taking an average of the retention rates for the three cohorts. All figures included in this report were constructed using the same method.

Degree Intent

Approximately 60% of the students who planned to obtain a degree or certificate returned to NVCC the following spring. In contrast, less than 50% of the students who indicated they had no intention of pursuing a degree returned the following spring semester (see Table 3). In addition, students in Cohort 1 and Cohort 3, whose degree intention was "unknown", had the lowest retention rates.

Table 3: Retention Rates by Degree Intention *

Degree Intention	Cohort 1 (Fall 1996 to Spring 1997) Retention Rates	Cohort 2 (Fall 1997 to Spring 1998) Retention Rates	Cohort 3 (Fall 1998 to Spring 1999) Retention Rates
Degree Intention	62.3 %	60.4 %	61.9 %
No Degree Intention	48.0 %	47.8 %	49.5 %
Unknown	43.5 %	52.0 %	47.8 %
All Students	*55.5 %*	*54.3 %*	*56.2 % ***

* For detailed data refer to Table A2 in Appendix A.

** Calculation of the decimal points differed slightly in some instances.

Intended Number of Semesters

On the NVCC Application for Admission, students were asked to indicate the number of semesters they plan to attend NVCC in order to obtain their educational goal. This factor appeared to be strongly related to student retention. As presented in Table 4, approximately 30% of the students who indicated that they would only attend NVCC one semester returned the following spring semester. In contrast, approximately 60% of the students who indicated they would attend NVCC more than one semester, returned the following spring semester. Students who indicated they would attend NVCC for three to four semesters had the highest return rates (64% to 66%).

Table 4: Retention Rates By Intended Number of Semesters*

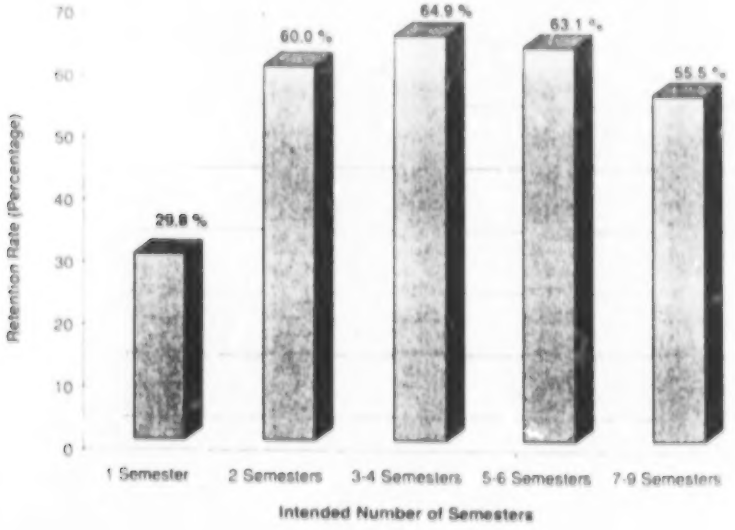
Intended Number Of Semesters	Cohort 1 (Fall 1996 to Spring 1997) Retention Rates	Cohort 2 (Fall 1997 to Spring 1998) Retention Rates	Cohort 3 (Fall 1998 to Spring 1999) Retention Rates
1 Semester	28.2 %	28.2 %	32.5 %
2 Semesters	60.0 %	59.9 %	60.2 %
3-4 Semesters	64.5 %	63.9 %	66.1 %
5-6 Semesters	64.3 %	61.3 %	63.4 %
7-9 Semesters	56.9 %	51.0 %	58.1 %
Unknown	54.3 %	53.4 %	54.9 %
All Students	*55.5 %*	*54.3 %*	*56.2 %* **

* For detailed data refer to Table A3 in Appendix A.

** Calculation of the decimal points differed slightly in some instances.

Figure 3 summarizes data presented in Table 4, by averaging the retention rates for the three cohorts in each category.

Figure 3: Retention Rates By Intended Number of Semesters



Section II: Retention Rates By Program Placement and Award Type

Retention Rates By Program Placement

When students choose (or are admitted to) a curriculum/program of the College, they are considered to be program placed. Students who were program placed in their first semester of enrollment returned to NVCC at a consistently higher rate than non-program placed students. Over 60% of the program placed students returned to NVCC as compared to approximately 50% of the non-program placed students (see Table 5).

Table 5: Retention Rates By Program Placement

Program Placement	Cohort 1 (Fall 1996 to Spring 1997)	Cohort 2 (Fall 1997 to Spring 1998)	Cohort 3 (Fall 1998 to Spring 1999)
	Retention Rates	Retention Rates	Retention Rates
Yes	60.8 %	60.4 %	62.6 %
No	49.3 %	48.9 %	50.5 %
All Students	*55.5 %*	*54.3 %*	*56.1 %*

* For detailed data refer to Table A4 in Appendix A.

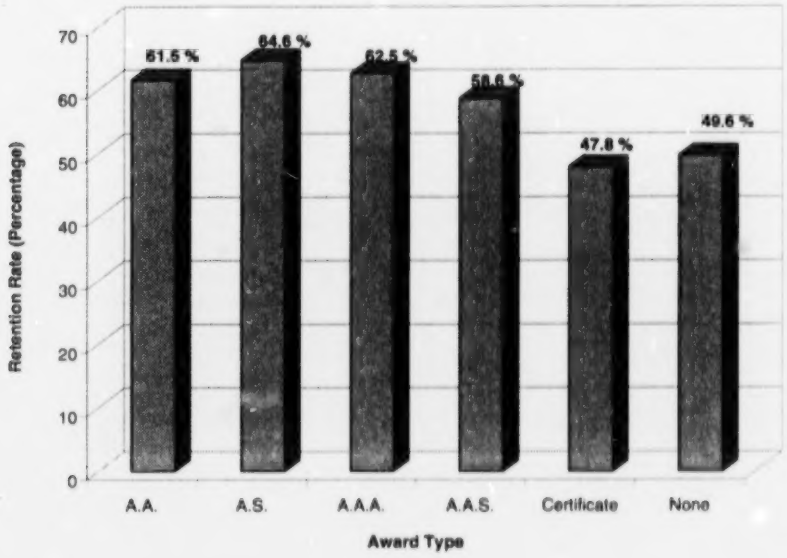
Table 6 and Figure 4 present the retention rates of students in the three cohorts, analyzed by award type. Over 64% of the students enrolled in an Associate in Science program returned to NVCC the following spring. This was the highest retention rate among students seeking an award. The lowest retention rates were for students enrolled in a Certificate program (between 45% to 52%) (see Table 6 and Figure 4). The data presented in Figure 4 is an average of the retention rates in each award type for students included in the three cohorts.

Table 6: Retention Rates By Award Type

Award Type	Cohort 1 (Fall 1996 to Spring 1997)	Cohort 2 (Fall 1997 to Spring 1998)	Cohort 3 (Fall 1998 to Spring 1999)
	Retention Rates	Retention Rates	Retention Rates
A.A.	59.7 %	62.1 %	62.8 %
A.S.	64.4 %	64.5 %	64.9 %
A.A.A.	65.6 %	58.5 %	62.7 %
A.A.S.	57.8 %	56.7 %	62.4 %
Certificate	51.9 %	46.9 %	44.6 %
No Award Selected	49.3 %	48.9 %	50.5 %
All Students	*55.5 %*	*54.3 %*	*56.1 %*

* For detailed data refer to A5 in Appendix A.

Figure 4: Retention Rates By Award Type



Section III: Retention Rates For Different Age Groups

Section III presents the retention rates for the three cohorts analyzed by the age of the students. The five age groups consisted of those students 21 years of age and under, 22-24 years of age, 25-29 years of age, 30-44 years of age, and 45 years of age and older.

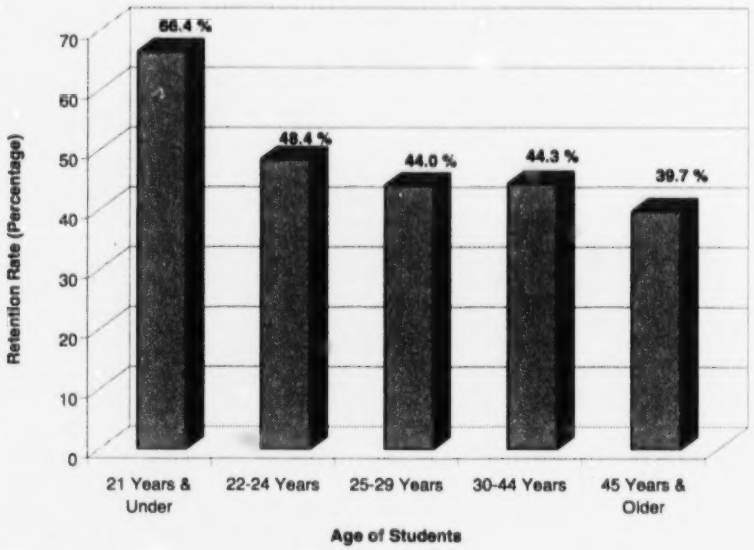
The return rates by the age of the students are presented in Table 7 and Figure 5. As Table 7 indicates, younger students were more likely to return to NVCC than older students. Students who were 21 years of age and under, had the highest return rates for all three cohorts (between 66% to 67%). Students 45 years of age and older had the lowest return rates of all of the students (38% to 41%). There was a large difference in the return rates of students 21 years of age and younger and the other age groups (approximately 20% to 30% difference). The return rates for all of the students included in the three cohorts were averaged and are presented in Figure 5.

Table 7: Retention Rates By Age of Students *

Age of Students	Cohort 1 (Fall 1996 to Spring 1997)	Cohort 2 (Fall 1997 to Spring 1998)	Cohort 3 (Fall 1998 to Spring 1999)
	Retention Rates	Retention Rates	Retention Rates
21 Years & Under	66.0 %	65.7 %	67.3 %
22 - 24 Years	48.6 %	47.3 %	49.1 %
25 - 29 Years	43.9 %	44.4 %	43.9 %
30 - 44 Years	45.9 %	42.9 %	44.2 %
45 Years & Older	41.2 %	37.7 %	40.1 %
All Students	*55.5 %*	*54.3 %*	*56.1 %*

* For detailed data refer to Table A6 in Appendix A.

Figure 5: Retention Rates By Age



Section IV: Retention Rates Analyzed By Enrollment Status

Section IV presents retention rates analyzed by the students' enrollment status (full time or part time).[6] In addition, Section IV also presents student retention rates by enrollment status analyzed separately for different age groups.

Return Rates By Enrollment Status

As presented in Table 8, students who were enrolled full time had higher rates of return than part-time students. Specifically, students who were enrolled full time had between 30% to 33% higher return rates than students who were enrolled part time. In addition, the return rate for full-time students was approximately 20% higher than the whole cohort (see Table 8). The low retention rate of part-time students significantly impacts the retention rate of the entire College. This is especially compounded by the fact that there is a larger proportion of part-time students than full-time students at NVCC.

Table 8: Retention Rates By Enrollment Status*

Enrollment Status	Cohort 1 (Fall 1996 to Spring 1997)	Cohort 2 (Fall 1997 to Spring 1998)	Cohort 3 (Fall 1998 to Spring 1999)
	Retention Rates	Retention Rates	Retention Rates
Full-Time	75.5 %	76.5 %	75.2 %
Part-Time	45.5 %	43.4 %	45.4 %
All Students	*55.5 %*	*54.3 %*	*56.1 %*

* For detailed data refer to Table A7 in Appendix A.

Return Rates For Full-Time Students By Age

Table 9 shows the return rates for students who were enrolled full time at NVCC analyzed separately for different age groups. The return rates for all age groups ranged between 63% to 82%. Students who were 21 years of age or younger had the highest rate of return, approximately 77%. In general, students who were between 30 to 44 years of age had the lowest rate of return (between 63% to 69%).

Table 9: Retention Rates For Full-Time Students, By Age*

Age of Students	Cohort 1 (Fall 1996 to Spring 1997)	Cohort 2 (Fall 1997 to Spring 1998)	Cohort 3 (Fall 1998 to Spring 1999)
	Retention Rates	Retention Rates	Retention Rates
21 Years & Under	76.7 %	77.7 %	77.4 %
22 – 24 Years	73.7 %	69.1 %	69.7 %
25 – 29 Years	68.2 %	75.3 %	64.7 %
30 – 44 Years	68.9 %	68.9 %	63.2 %
45 Years & Older	68.4 %	79.3 %	82.2 % **
All Full-Time Students	*75.5 %*	*76.5 %*	*75.2 %*

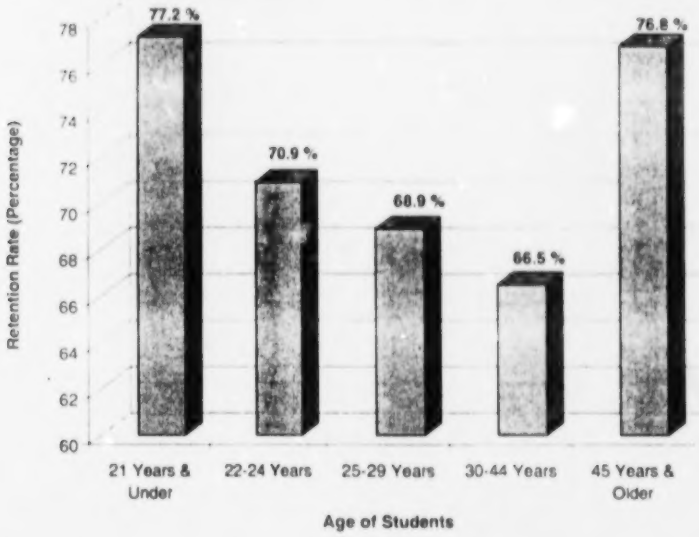
* For detailed data refer to Table A8 in Appendix A.

** The number of observations in this category was relatively small.

[6] Enrollment status (part time or full time) was assigned to students based only on fall semester enrollments. Those who were enrolled in 12 or more credit hours were considered to be full-time students.

Figure 6 presents the retention rates for full-time students analyzed separately by age. The data presented in Figure 6 is an average of the three cohorts. As shown in Table 9, full-time students who were 21 years of age and younger and students 45 years of age and older had higher retention rates (77%) than the other age groups.

Figure 6: Retention Rates For Full-Time Students, By Age



Return Rates For Part-Time Students By Age

As seen in Table 10 and Figure 7, the return rates for part-time students of all age groups, were considerably lower than those of students enrolled full time. The return rate for part-time students across all age groups ranged from 36% to 55%. Again, students 21 years of age and under had the highest return rate, with 51% to 55% returning to NVCC the next semester. The other age groups had return rates ranging from 36% to 44%. Part-time students who were 45 years of age and older had the lowest return rate (36% to 39%).

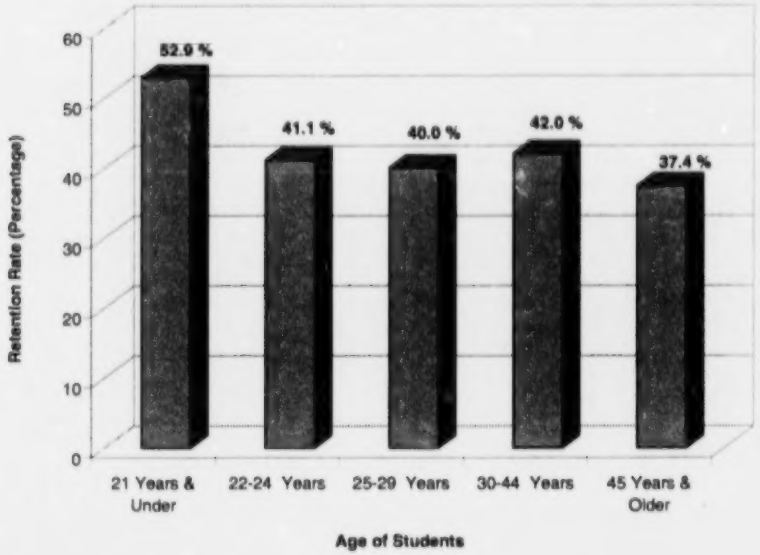
Table 10: Retention Rates For Part-Time Students, By Age *

Age of Students	Cohort 1 (Fall 1996 to Spring 1997)	Cohort 2 (Fall 1997 to Spring 1998)	Cohort 3 (Fall 1998 to Spring 1999)
	Retention Rate	Retention Rate	Retention Rate
21 Years & Under	53.0 %	51.0 %	54.6 %
22 – 24 Years	40.5 %	41.5 %	41.3 %
25 – 29 Years	40.5 %	39.9 %	39.5 %
30 – 44 Years	43.9 %	40.5 %	41.8 %
45 Years & Older	39.4 %	35.6 %	37.3 %
All Students	*45.5 %*	*43.4 %*	*45.4 %*

* For detailed data refer to Table A9 in Appendix A

The data presented in Figure 7 is an average of the retention rates, by age, for the part-time students in the three cohorts.

Figure 7: Retention Rates For Part-Time Students, By Age



Section V: Retention Rates Analyzed By Time of Attendance

Section V presents retention rates analyzed by the students' time of class attendance (day versus night) at NVCC. The purpose was to determine the degree of relationship between the time of class attendance (which could be used as a proxy variable for family and work commitments) and retention rates.[7] In addition, Section V also presents student return rates analyzed by both time of attendance and age of students.

Return Rates By Time of Attendance

Students who took both day and night classes during their first semester at NVCC had the highest return rate (see Table 11).[8] Approximately 68% of the students who attended both day and night classes in the fall semester returned the following spring semester. Those students enrolled only in day classes had the second highest return rate (approximately 59%). Students who attended only night classes had the lowest return rate (approximately 39%).[9] In addition, students who attended both night and day classes had substantially higher retention rates than those who only attended night classes (26% to 29% higher).

Table 11: Retention Rates By Time of Attendance *

Time of Attendance	Cohort 1 (Fall 1996 to Spring 1997)	Cohort 2 (Fall 1997 to Spring 1998)	Cohort 3 (Fall 1998 to Spring 1999)
	Retention Rates	Retention Rates	Retention Rates
Day Classes Only	59.4 %	57.8 %	59.3 %
Night Classes Only	38.7 %	38.5 %	40.4 %
Both Day & Night Classes	67.9 %	66.5 %	66.8 %
All Students	*55.5 %*	*54.3 %*	*56.1 %*

* For detailed data refer to Table A10 in Appendix A.

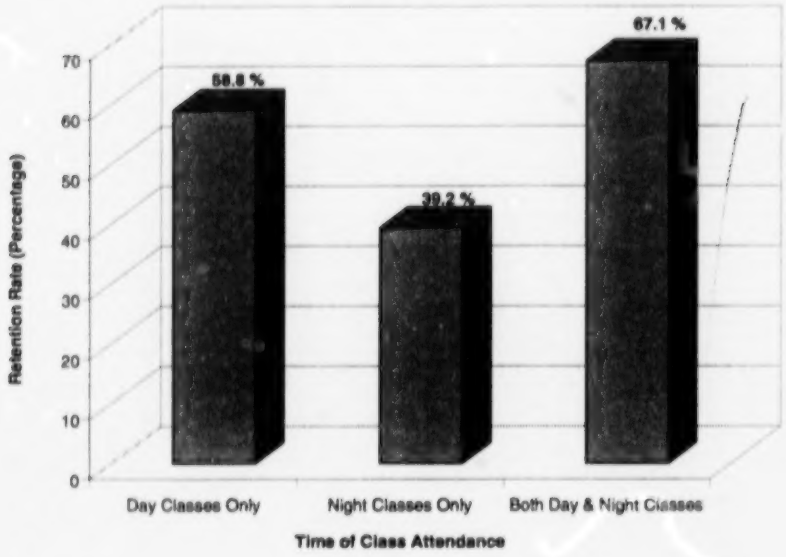
[7] Time of attendance *per se* may not be related to the retention rates of students. However, time of attendance to a large measure could reveal certain characteristics of students, which in turn could be related to retention rates. For example, students who attended classes only at night could be employed full time or may have day-time family commitments. Both of these factors could be closely related to lower retention rates.

[8] A possible explanation of the high retention rates of those who attended both day and night classes could be an indicator of long term academic goals (e.g. graduation, transfer), which could be closely related to higher retention rates.

[9] According to SCHEV standards, night classes are defined as those that begin at 6:00 p.m. or later.

Figure 8 summarizes data presented in Table 11, by averaging the retention rates for the three cohorts in each category.

Figure 8: Retention Rates By Time of Attendance



Return Rates By Time of Attendance For Different Age Groups

Table 12 presents student retention rates by time of attendance for the different age groups. In each age group, students who attended both day and night classes had the highest return rate (54% to 76%). Regardless of age, students who only took day classes had the second highest return rates (36% to 70%). Students who only enrolled in night classes had the lowest return rate among all age groups (35% to 43%) (see Table 12).

As shown in Table 12, younger students who attended both day and night classes had the highest retention rates. Specifically, students 21 years of age and under, who attended both day and night courses, had the highest rate of return (approximately 70%). The lowest rate of return (approximately 37%) was for students 45 years of age and older, who attended night classes only.

Table 12: Retention Rates By Time of Attendance For Different Age Groups *

Age of Students	Time of Attendance	Cohort 1 (Fall 1996 to Spring 1997) Retention Rates	Cohort 2 (Fall 1997 to Spring 1998) Retention Rates	Cohort 3 (Fall 1998 to Spring 1999) Retention Rates
21 Years & Under	Day Only	68.5 %	68.0 %	70.0 %
	Night Only	38.9 %	41.7 %	42.9 %
	Both Day & Night	71.2 %	70.0 %	70.4 %
	Total	66.0 %	65.7 %	67.3 %
22 - 24 Years	Day Only	55.2 %	50.3 %	53.0 %
	Night Only	35.1 %	38.4 %	39.0 %
	Both Day & Night	60.7 %	58.7 %	58.7 %
	Total	48.6 %	47.3 %	49.1 %
25 - 29 Years	Day Only	40.6 %	44.4 %	44.2 %
	Night Only	40.5 %	38.8 %	40.2 %
	Both Day & Night	63.7 %	59.2 %	54.9 %
	Total	43.9 %	44.4 %	43.9 %
30 - 44 Years	Day Only	48.0 %	43.6 %	42.7 %
	Night Only	39.3 %	37.1 %	40.6 %
	Both Day & Night	63.0 %	62.6 %	60.2 %
	Total	45.9 %	42.9 %	44.2 %
45 Years & Older	Day Only	42.3 %	35.5 %	35.8 %
	Night Only	37.4 %	36.2 %	37.6 %
	Both Day & Night	54.2 %	63.4 %	76.2 %
	Total	41.2 %	37.7 %	40.1 %

* For detailed data refer to Table A11 in Appendix A.

Summary

This report presents data on NVCC student retention patterns. Retention rates were analyzed for three groups of students who enrolled for the first-time at NVCC during the fall 1996 semester, or the fall 1997 semester, or the fall 1998 semester. For the purposes of this study, retention rate was defined as the proportion of fall semester entrants who returned to NVCC the following spring semester. The retention patterns were analyzed by students' educational objectives, program placement and award type, age, enrollment status, and the time of class attendance. The retention patterns for the three cohorts included in the study were similar.

Of the first-time students enrolled during the fall 1996 semester, 56% returned to NVCC the following spring semester. The fall 1997 and fall 1998 cohorts had similar return rates.

Students indicated their educational objectives at the time of entrance. Students who stated their educational objective was to transfer to a four-year college or university had a high rate of return (approximately 64%). In contrast, the retention rates for those who indicated either job advancement of self-improvement as their goal had much lower rates of return (33% to 40%). In addition, approximately 60% of the students who planned to obtain a degree or certificate returned to NVCC the following spring semester.

At the time of entrance to NVCC, students indicated the number of semesters they planned to attend NVCC. This factor appeared to be strongly related to student retention rates. Students who indicated they would attend NVCC for three to four semesters had high return rates (64% to 66%). However, those students who intended to be enrolled at NVCC for only one semester had retention rates as low as 28%.

Students who were program placed in their first semester of enrollment returned to NVCC at a consistently higher rate than non-program placed students. Over 60% of the program placed students returned to NVCC as compared to approximately 50% of the non-program placed students. In addition, of the program placed students, those enrolled in an Associate in Science program had the highest retention rates (approximately 64%) and those enrolled in a Certificate program had the lowest retention rates (45% to 52%).

When the retention rates were analyzed by the age of the students, the data indicated that younger students were more likely to return to NVCC than older students. Students who were 21 years of age and younger had high retention rates (approximately 66%). Students 45 years of age and older had relatively lower return rates than the other age groups (38% to 41%).

Students who were enrolled full time had higher rates of return than part-time students. In general, students who were enrolled full time had between 30% to 33% higher return rates than students who were enrolled part time. When the data was further analyzed by the age of the students, it was found that full-time students who were 21 years of age and younger had the highest retention rates (approximately 77%). Among the students who were enrolled part time, those 21 years of age and younger had higher retention rates (between 51% and 55%) than those of other age groups.

Students who took both day and night classes during their first semester at NVCC had high return rates (approximately 67%). This was followed by students who attended only day

classes (59% rate of return). The data was also analyzed by the time of class attendance for different age groups. Regardless of age, students who attended both day and night classes had very high retention rates. Specifically, students 21 years of age and younger, who attended both day and night classes, had the highest rate of return (approximately 70%). The lowest rate of return (36% to 38%) was for students 45 years of age and older, who attended only night classes.

To summarize, several sub-groups of students with specific characteristics returned to NVCC at varying rates. Students who were 21 years of age or younger, those enrolled in 12 or more credits (full time), and students who attended both day and night classes had a higher probability of returning to NVCC. Similarly, students who indicated that their academic goal was to transfer to a four-year institution or to earn a degree had higher retention rates. In contrast, those who were attending NVCC for self-improvement or advancement in their current job had relatively lower retention rates. Students who were program placed during their first semester had higher retention rates. This was especially true of students enrolled in an Associate in Science program. It is worth noting that those who intended to be at NVCC for only one semester had a low retention rate (30%) while those who intended to be at NVCC for three to four semesters had a high retention rate (65%).

Appendix A

Table A1: Retention Rates By Educational Objectives

Educational Objectives	Cohort 1			Cohort 2			Cohort 3		
	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Retention Rate	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Retention Rate	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Retention Rate
	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
Transfer	5,366	3,428	63.9 %	5,362	3,432	64.0 %	6,064	3,939	65.0 %
Obtain Job	578	304	52.6 %	583	321	55.1 %	674	360	53.4 %
Current Job Advancement	835	331	39.6 %	954	315	33.0 %	921	347	37.7 %
Explore Career Possibilities	1,004	495	49.3 %	1,067	526	49.3 %	1,181	552	46.7 %
Self-Improvement	1,250	463	37.0 %	1,343	464	34.5 %	1,370	530	38.7 %
Unknown	93	48	51.6 %	70	39	55.7 %	70	48	68.6 %
All Students	9,126	5,069	55.5 %	9,379	5,097	54.3 %	10,280	5,776	56.2 % *

* Calculation of the decimal points differed slightly in some instances.

Table A2: Retention Rates By Degree Intention

Degree Intention	Cohort 1			Cohort 2			Cohort 3		
	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Retention Rate	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Retention Rate	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Retention Rate
	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
Degree Intention	4,808	2,997	62.3 %	4,850	2,930	60.4 %	5,582	3,453	61.9 %
No Degree Intention	4,295	2,062	48.0 %	4,504	2,154	47.8 %	4,675	2,312	49.5 %
Unknown	23	10	43.5 %	25	13	52.0 %	23	11	47.8 %
All Students	9,126	5,069	55.5 %	9,379	5,097	54.3 %	10,280	5,776	56.2 % *

* Calculation of the decimal point differed slightly in some instances.

Table A3: Retention Rates By Intended Number of Semesters

Number Of Semesters	Cohort 1			Cohort 2			Cohort 3		
	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Retention Rate	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Retention Rate	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Retention Rate
	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
1 Semester	811	229	28.2 %	701	198	28.2 %	850	276	32.5 %
2 Semesters	1,191	715	60.0 %	1,020	611	59.9 %	1,175	707	60.2 %
3-4 Semesters	1,960	1,265	64.5 %	1,622	1,036	63.9 %	1,959	1,295	66.1 %
5-6 Semesters	482	310	64.3 %	426	261	61.3 %	410	260	63.4 %
7-9 Semesters	362	206	56.9 %	288	147	51.0 %	277	161	58.1 %
Unknown	4,320	2,344	54.3 %	5,322	2,844	53.4 %	5,609	3,077	54.9 %
All Students	9,126	5,069	55.5 %	9,379	5,097	54.3 %	10,280	5,776	56.2 % *

* Calculation of the decimal point differed slightly in some instances.

Table A4: Retention Rates By Program Placement

Program Placement	Cohort 1			Cohort 2			Cohort 3		
	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Retention Rate	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Retention Rate	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Retention Rate
	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
Yes	5,001	3,039	60.8 %	4,439	2,679	60.4 %	4,707	2,948	62.6 %
No	4,200	2,070	49.3 %	4,996	2,445	48.9 %	5,603	2,832	50.5 %
All Students	9,201	5,109	55.5 %	9,435	5,124	54.3 %	10,310	5,780	56.1 %

Table A5: Retention Rates By Award Type

Award Type	Cohort 1			Cohort 2			Cohort 3		
	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Retention Rate	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Retention Rate	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Retention Rate
	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
A.A.	817	488	59.7 %	752	467	62.1 %	786	494	62.8 %
A.S.	2,219	1,428	64.4 %	1,939	1,250	64.5 %	2,564	1,665	64.9 %
A.A.A.	64	42	65.6 %	53	31	58.5 %	59	37	62.7 %
A.A.S.	1,587	918	57.8 %	1,386	786	56.7 %	973	607	62.4 %
Certificate	314	163	51.9 %	309	145	46.9 %	325	145	44.6 %
No Award Selection	4,200	2,070	49.3 %	4,996	2,445	48.9 %	5,603	2,832	50.5 %
All Students	9,201	5,109	55.5 %	9,435	5,124	54.3 %	10,310	5,780	56.1 %

Table A6: Retention Rates By Age of Students

Age of Students	Cohort 1			Cohort 2			Cohort 3		
	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Retention Rate	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Retention Rate	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Retention Rate
	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
21 Years & Under	4,541	2,997	66.0 %	4,586	3,015	65.7 %	5,226	3,516	67.3 %
22-24 Years	965	469	48.6 %	970	459	47.3 %	1,041	511	49.1 %
25-29 Years	1,265	555	43.9 %	1,266	562	44.4 %	1,299	570	43.9 %
30-44 Years	1,826	839	45.9 %	1,997	856	42.9 %	2,036	899	44.2 %
45 Years & Older	604	249	41.2 %	616	232	37.7 %	708	284	40.1 %
All Students	9,201	5,109	55.5 %	9,435	5,124	54.3 %	10,310	5,780	56.1 %

Table A7: Retention Rates By Enrollment Status

Enrollment Status	Cohort 1			Cohort 2			Cohort 3		
	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Retention Rate	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Retention Rate	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Retention Rate
	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
Full-Time	3,071	2,320	75.5 %	3,101	2,373	76.5 %	3,693	2,777	75.2 %
Part-Time	6,130	2,789	45.5 %	6,334	2,751	43.4 %	6,617	3,003	45.4 %
All Students	9,201	5,109	55.5 %	9,435	5,124	54.3 %	10,310	5,780	56.1 %

Table A8: Retention Rates For Full-Time Students, By Age

Age of Full-Time Students	Cohort 1			Cohort 2			Cohort 3		
	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Retention Rate	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Retention Rate	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Retention Rate
	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
21 Years & Under	2,495	1,913	76.7 %	2,539	1,972	77.7 %	2,912	2,253	77.4 %
22-24 Years	236	174	73.7 %	204	141	69.1 %	284	198	69.7 %
25-29 Years	154	105	68.2 %	162	122	75.3 %	224	145	64.7 %
30-44 Years	148	102	68.9 %	167	115	68.9 %	228	144	63.2 %
45 Years & Older	38	26	68.4 %	29	23	79.3 %	45	37	82.2 %
All Students	3,071	2,320	75.5 %	3,101	2,373	76.5 %	3,693	2,777	75.2 %

Table A9: Retention Rates For Part-Time Students, By Age

Age of Part-Time Students	Cohort 1			Cohort 2			Cohort 3		
	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Retention Rate	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Retention Rate	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Retention Rate
	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
21 Years & Under	2,046	1,084	53.0 %	2,047	1,043	51.0 %	2314	1,263	54.6 %
22-24 Years	729	295	40.5 %	766	318	41.5 %	757	313	41.3 %
25-29 Years	1,111	450	40.5 %	1,104	440	39.9 %	1075	425	39.5 %
30-44 Years	1,678	737	43.9 %	1,830	741	40.5 %	1808	755	41.8 %
45 Years & Older	566	223	39.4 %	587	209	35.6 %	663	247	37.3 %
All Students	6,130	2,789	45.5 %	6,334	2,751	43.4 %	6617	3,003	45.4 %

Table A10: Retention Rates By Time of Attendance

Time of Attendance	Cohort 1			Cohort 2			Cohort 3		
	Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Retention Rate	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Retention Rate	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Retention Rate
	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
Day Only	5,003	2,971	59.4 %	5,270	3,046	57.8 %	5,684	3,369	59.3 %
Night Only	2,442	945	38.7 %	2,467	949	38.5 %	2,581	1,044	40.4 %
Both Day and Night	1,756	1,193	67.9 %	1,698	1,129	66.5 %	2,045	1,367	66.8 %
All Students	9,201	5,109	55.5 %	9,435	5,124	54.3 %	10,310	5,780	56.1 %

Table A11: Retention Rates By Time of Attendance and Age of Students

Age of Students	Time of Attendance	Cohort 1			Cohort 2			Cohort 3		
		Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Retention Rate	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Retention Rate	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Retention Rate
		#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
21 Years & Under	Day Only	2,910	1,992	68.5 %	3,046	2,070	68.0 %	3,324	2,328	70.0 %
	Night Only	483	188	38.9 %	470	196	41.7 %	546	234	42.9 %
	Both	1,148	817	71.2 %	1,070	749	70.0 %	1,356	954	70.4 %
	Total	4,541	2,997	66.0 %	4,586	3,015	65.7 %	5,226	3,516	67.3 %
22-24 Years	Day Only	420	232	55.2 %	431	217	50.3 %	483	256	53.0 %
	Night Only	367	129	35.1 %	367	141	38.4 %	369	144	39.0 %
	Both	178	108	60.7 %	172	101	58.7 %	189	111	58.7 %
	Total	965	469	48.6 %	970	459	47.3 %	1,041	511	49.1 %
25-29 Years	Day Only	515	209	40.6 %	527	234	44.4 %	557	246	44.2 %
	Night Only	568	230	40.5 %	538	209	38.8 %	569	229	40.2 %
	Both	182	116	63.7 %	201	119	59.2 %	173	95	54.9 %
	Total	1,265	555	43.9 %	1,266	562	44.4 %	1,299	570	43.9 %
30-44 Years	Day Only	848	407	48.0 %	934	407	43.6 %	957	409	42.7 %
	Night Only	778	306	39.3 %	849	315	37.1 %	815	331	40.6 %
	Both	200	126	63.0 %	214	134	62.6 %	264	159	60.2 %
	Total	1,826	839	45.9 %	1,997	856	42.9 %	2,036	899	44.2 %
45 Years & Older	Day Only	310	131	42.3 %	332	118	35.5 %	363	130	35.8 %
	Night Only	246	92	37.4 %	243	88	36.2 %	282	106	37.6 %
	Both	48	26	54.2 %	41	26	63.4 %	63	48	76.2 %
	Total	604	249	41.2 %	616	232	37.7 %	708	284	40.1 %

Appendix B

Appendix B presents a brief description of the three cohorts discussed in the report. The tables present the characteristics of the three cohorts for each fall semester (fall 1996 through fall 1998).

Table B1: First-Time Students By Educational Goals, Fall 1996 to Fall 1998

Educational Goals	Cohort 1 Fall 1996		Cohort 2 Fall 1997		Cohort 3 Fall 1998	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Transfer	5,366	58.8 %	5,362	57.2 %	6,064	59.0 %
Obtain Job	578	6.3 %	583	6.2 %	674	6.6 %
Current Job Advancement	835	9.1 %	954	10.2 %	921	9.0 %
Explore Career Possibilities	1,004	11.0 %	1,067	11.4 %	1,181	11.5 %
Self-Improvement	1,250	13.7 %	1,343	14.3 %	1,370	13.3 %
Unknown	93	1.0 %	70	0.7 %	70	0.7 %
Total	9,126	100.0 %	9,379	100.0 %	10,280	100.0 %

Table B2: First-Time Students By Degree Intention, Fall 1996 to Fall 1998

Degree Intention	Cohort 1 Fall 1996		Cohort 2 Fall 1997		Cohort 3 Fall 1998	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Degree Intention	4,808	52.6 %	4,850	51.7 %	5,582	54.3 %
No Degree Intention	4,295	47.1 %	4,504	48.0 %	4,675	45.5 %
Unknown	23	0.3 %	25	0.3 %	23	0.2 %
Total	9,126	100.0 %	9,379	100.0 %	10,280	100.0 %

Table B3: First-Time Students By Intended Number of Semesters, Fall 1996 to Fall 1998

Number Of Semesters	Cohort 1 Fall 1996		Cohort 2 Fall 1997		Cohort 3 Fall 1998	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1 Semester	811	16.9 %	701	17.3 %	850	18.2 %
2 Semesters	1,191	24.8 %	1,020	25.1 %	1,175	25.2 %
3-4 Semesters	1,960	40.8 %	1,622	40.0 %	1,959	41.9 %
5-6 Semesters	482	10.0 %	426	10.5 %	410	8.8 %
7-9 Semesters	362	7.5 %	288	7.1 %	277	5.9 %
Total Responses	4,806	100.0 %	4,057	100.0 %	4,671	100.0 %
Unknown	4,320		5,322		5,609	

Table B4: First-Time Students By Program Placement, Fall 1996 to Fall 1998

Program Placement	Cohort 1 Fall 1996		Cohort 2 Fall 1997		Cohort 3 Fall 1998	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	5,001	54.4 %	4,439	47.0 %	4,707	45.7 %
No	4,200	45.6 %	4,996	53.0 %	5,603	54.3 %
Total	9,201	100.0 %	9,435	100.0 %	10,310	100.0 %

Table B5: First-Time Students By Award Type, Fall 1996 to Fall 1998

Award Type	Cohort 1 Fall 1996		Cohort 2 Fall 1997		Cohort 3 Fall 1998	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
A.A.	817	8.9 %	752	8.0 %	786	7.6 %
A.S.	2,219	24.1 %	1,939	20.6 %	2,564	24.9 %
A.A.A.	64	0.7 %	53	0.6 %	59	0.6 %
A.A.S.	1,587	17.2 %	1,386	14.7 %	973	9.4 %
Certificate	314	3.4 %	309	3.3 %	325	3.2 %
No Award Selected	4,200	45.6 %	4,996	53.0 %	5,603	54.3 %
Total	9,201	100.0 %	9,435	100.0 %	10,310	100.0 %

Table B6: First-Time Students By Age, Fall 1996 to Fall 1998

Age of Students	Cohort 1 Fall 1996		Cohort 2 Fall 1997		Cohort 3 Fall 1998	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
21 Years & Under	4,541	49.4 %	4,586	48.6 %	5,226	50.7 %
22-24 Years	965	10.5 %	970	10.3 %	1,041	10.1 %
25-29 Years	1,265	13.7 %	1,266	13.4 %	1,299	12.6 %
30-44 Years	1,826	19.8 %	1,997	21.2 %	2,036	19.7 %
45 Years & Older	604	6.6 %	616	6.5 %	708	6.9 %
All Students	9,201	100.0 %	9,435	100.0 %	10,310	100.0 %

Table B7: First-Time Students By Enrollment Status, Fall 1996 to Fall 1998

Enrollment Status	Cohort 1 Fall 1996		Cohort 2 Fall 1997		Cohort 3 Fall 1998	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Full-Time	3,071	33.4 %	3,101	32.9 %	3,693	35.8 %
Part-Time	6,130	66.6 %	6,334	67.1 %	6,617	64.2 %
All Students	9,201	100.0 %	9,435	100.0 %	10,310	100.0 %

Table B8: First-Time Students By Enrollment Status and Age, Fall 1996 to Fall 1998

Age of Students	Enrollment Status	Cohort 1 Fall 1996		Cohort 2 Fall 1997		Cohort 3 Fall 1998	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
21 Years & Under	Full-Time	2,495	54.9%	2,539	55.4 %	2,912	55.7 %
	Part-Time	2,046	45.1 %	2,047	44.6 %	2,314	44.3 %
	All Students	4,541	100.0 %	4,586	100.0 %	5,226	100.0 %
22-24 Years	Full-Time	236	24.5 %	204	21.0 %	284	27.3 %
	Part-Time	729	75.5 %	766	79.0 %	757	72.7 %
	All Students	965	100.0 %	970	100.0 %	1,041	100.0 %
25-29 Years	Full-Time	154	17.4 %	162	17.5 %	224	22.8 %
	Part-Time	729	82.6 %	766	82.5 %	757	77.2 %
	All Students	883	100.0 %	928	100.0 %	981	100.0 %
30-44 Years	Full-Time	148	8.1 %	167	8.4 %	228	11.2 %
	Part-Time	1,678	91.9 %	1,830	91.6 %	1,808	88.8 %
	All Students	1,826	100.0 %	1,997	100.0 %	2,036	100.0 %
45 Years & Older	Full-Time	38	6.3 %	29	4.7 %	45	6.4 %
	Part-Time	566	93.7 %	587	95.3 %	663	93.6 %
	All Students	604	100.0 %	616	100.0 %	708	100.0 %

Table B9: First-Time Students By Time of Attendance, Fall 1996 to Fall 1998

Time of Attendance	Cohort 1 Fall 1996		Cohort 2 Fall 1997		Cohort 3 Fall 1998	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Day Only	5,003	54.4 %	5,270	55.9 %	5,684	55.1 %
Night Only	2,442	26.5 %	2,467	26.1 %	2,581	25.0 %
Both Day and Night	1,756	19.1 %	1,698	18.0 %	2,045	19.9 %
All Students	9,201	100.0 %	9,435	100.0 %	10,310	100.0 %

Table B10: First-Time Students by Time of Attendance and Age, Fall 1996 to Fall 1998

Age of Students	Time of Attendance	Cohort 1 Fall 1996		Cohort 2 Fall 1997		Cohort 3 Fall 1998	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
21 Years & Under	Day Only	2,910	64.1 %	3,046	66.4 %	3,324	63.6 %
	Night Only	483	10.6 %	470	10.3 %	546	10.5 %
	Both	1,148	25.3 %	1,070	23.3 %	1,356	25.9 %
	All Students	4,541	100.0 %	4,586	100.0 %	5,226	100.0 %
22-24 Years	Day Only	420	43.5 %	431	44.4 %	483	46.4 %
	Night Only	367	38.0 %	367	37.8 %	369	35.4 %
	Both	178	18.5 %	172	17.8 %	189	18.2 %
	All Students	965	100.0 %	970	100.0 %	1,041	100.0 %
25-29 Years	Day Only	515	40.7 %	527	41.6 %	557	42.9 %
	Night Only	568	44.9 %	538	42.5 %	569	43.8 %
	Both	182	14.4 %	201	15.9 %	173	13.3 %
	All Students	1,265	100.0 %	1,266	100.0 %	1,299	100.0 %
30-44 Years	Day Only	848	46.4 %	934	46.8 %	957	47.0 %
	Night Only	778	42.6 %	849	42.5 %	815	40.0 %
	Both	200	11.0 %	214	10.7 %	264	13.0 %
	All Students	1,826	100.0 %	1,997	100.0 %	2,036	100.0 %
45 Years & Older	Day Only	310	51.3 %	332	53.9 %	363	51.3 %
	Night Only	246	40.7 %	243	39.4 %	282	39.8 %
	Both	48	8.0 %	41	6.7 %	63	8.9 %
	All Students	604	100.0 %	616	100.0 %	708	100.0 %

NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COLLEGE MISSION AND GOALS

The mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to respond to the educational needs of its dynamic and diverse constituencies through an array of comprehensive programs and services that facilitate learning and workforce development in an environment of open access and through lifelong educational opportunities.

To achieve this mission, the following strategic goals for 1999-2001 are established:

I. Sustain and Strengthen Academic Quality and Teaching Excellence.

II. Enhance the Quality of Services to Students.

III. Expand the Integration of Technology in Instruction and Administration.

IV. Increase Access to College Programs and Services.

V. Improve the Quality of Institutional Communication.

VI. Strengthen Programs That Help Build a World Class Workforce.

VII. Promote Responsiveness to Diversity of Students and Employees.

VIII. Strengthen and Develop Additional Linkages with Community Groups.

IX. Integrate College Planning and Facility Requirements.

X. Enhance the Overall Wellness of Our Working and Living Environments.